

Foundation Study 15: The Trinity

The Trinity is a defining theological doctrine of Christianity. It is not stated outright in the Scripture but is rather, the product of deduction. It is the truth about the persons of the Godhead and reconciles God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It states that **God is one being yet three, distinct, equal persons.**

There is an element of mystery about the Trinity that can't be fully explained. But this is true about God in other ways as well. Many things about God are taken by faith to be true but at the same time, are not completely understood (Isaiah 55:8–9, Romans 11:33-34). Charles Ryrie says, “Even with all the discussion and delineation that we attempt in relation to the Trinity, we must acknowledge that it is, in the final analysis, a mystery. We accept all the data as truth even though they go beyond our understanding.”¹

The oneness of God is referred to in both the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:4) and the New Testament (1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; James 2:19). The plurality of the Godhead is seen in the Old Testament in the plural use of pronouns “our” and “us” (Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Isaiah 6:8) and the plural form of the name of God (Elohim).

The triune nature of the Godhead is seen in the New Testament in the singular use of the term “name” in reference to all three persons of the Godhead in Matthew 28:19.

Chafer states, “The Father is presented as electing, loving, and bestowing. The Son is presented as suffering, redeeming, and upholding the universe. The Holy Spirit is presented as regenerating, indwelling, baptizing, energizing, and sanctifying.”²

1. 1 Peter 1:2

The Father is God. The Father is the guiding authority over the Son (Jesus Christ) (Romans 15:6) and speaks and acts through Him (John 6:27). He is the origin of all created things (1 Corinthians 8:6), the final owner of the Kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:24), the source of mercy and comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3), worthy of everlasting

¹ Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, 62.

² Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, 45.

praise (2 Corinthians 11:31), and the one who raised Jesus from the dead (Galatians 1:1). He is the source of all our blessings (Ephesians 1:3), the object of our thanks (Ephesians 5:20), and the one who enables us to love faithfully (Ephesians 6:23). He is the ultimate recipient of all our adoration (Philippians 2:11). He is the One to whom all the redeemed belong (1 Thessalonians 1:1). He approves of those who care for orphans and widows in distress and keep themselves pure (James 1:27). He predestines, selects (1 Peter 1:3), loves, and preserves believers (Jude 1:1). He gave honor and glory to Jesus during the transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16–18).

2. Titus 2:13

The Son (Jesus) is God. He is referred to as God (John 1:1, 5:18, 10:33; Philippians 2:6). He did things only God can do. He forgave sins (Mark 2:7), raised the dead (John 12:9), upholds all things (Colossians 1:17), created all that exists (John 1:3), and is the future judge (John 5:27). Jesus Christ is the human expression of God (Colossians 1:15, 1:19, 2:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Hebrews 1:3). His existence reveals God (John 1:18). He is eternally preexistent (Colossians 1:15; John 1:1). He demonstrates the nature of God in His association with creation because He is both the reason and agent of all that exists (Colossians 1:16). He has power over all that exists (Matthew 11:4–5), is the sustainer of all that exists (Hebrews 1:3) and has all authority over all that exists (Colossians 1:15).

3. Acts 5:3–4

The Holy Spirit is God. He has the same nature as God (John 4:24). He is the author of Revelation (Mark 12:36; 2 Peter 1:21). He gives people eternal life (John 3:6), enabled people to speak in different languages at Pentecost (Acts 2:4), and raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 1:4). He is the foretaste of future glory (Romans 8:23). He convicts (John 16:8) and converts (Titus 3:5). He regenerates and transforms (1 Corinthians 6:11). He guides and empowers (Galatians 5:16). He affirms the truthfulness of Scripture (1 Thessalonians 1:5). “The Trinity illustrates perfect love. The unity of the Father, Son and Spirit represent the pattern for relationships with one another in the Body of Christ.” —Steve Elliott

The Trinity

God is one being, yet three distinct, equal persons

